A Critical Evaluation of Christian Education in Yikhum Church: the Challenges to it the Postmodern Era

Content

1. Introduction
2. Origin of the Church
3. Branches (dept.) within the Church
    i. Main body (Church)
    ii. Woman department
    iii. Youth department
    iv. Sunday school
4. Activities in the Church
    i. Worships and prayer meeting
    ii. Spiritual Renewal
    iii. Prayer Warriors
    iv. Cell Group Meeting (Khel)
5. Impact
6. Critical Analysis
7. Conclusion

Bibliography

1. Introduction

Yikhum[1] Church is the first established Church among the Lothas. Yikhum Church is seems like the spiritual father of the Lothas' Churches and even to some other tribes also. Lately Yikhum Church is running 119 years from the time the light of Christ entered and praying forward to celebrate 125 years in 2023. Church is trying best way to give biblical education to the believers as far as possible. In the following, we will be discussing about the origin of the Church in brief, departments within the Church, and various spiritual activities in the Church. Paper will also briefly analysis the Church and brings out some of the positive strengths and weak strengths.

2. Origin of the Church

On April 5, 1886 foreign missionary by a name Witter came in the village proclaiming the gospel, but no one has responded him on that day. Because in those eras people were so strong in Animistic believe. He rested in the village that night and in the following day also he preached the gospel with the people.[2] On that day one small boy by a name Nkhao Jungi converted into Christian and companies him. Nkhao was taken to Impur at Mokokchung for study. He was given education under foreign missionaries. After his studies, he came back to the village and took his brother *Shanjamo*[3] Jungi back to Impur in order to give him Christian Education.[4]

Nkhao came back to the village and began to share the gospel, and told them to repent from their sin for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand and Jesus Christ is their only Savior. As a head-hunter they were very strong in their traditional believe, so instead of listening to what he was telling them about hope and salvation they cured and chased him out from the village.[5] God had comforted him continually to spread His words, so he worked harder to teach and proclaimed the gospel from the Bible passages based on the gospel according to Matt 3:2-4, 12:24, 30, 31 and John 15). After some years later his brother Shanjamo also joined him after coming back from the America and worked together with him. Slowly their works was fruitful and it has

---

[1] Yikhum Village is located around 12 kilometres from Wokha Town, Nagaland. The original name of the village was *Khumyanpan.* In those days of forefathers, they investigated the places and did some rituals things, worshiped the areas or places before they began to settled and that is the reason they called it *Khumyanpan*. However, later the name was changed to *Yikhum* (*Yi-khum*) meaning "*believe in word*". The name Yikhum compiled with two words *Oyi* meaning word, *khuma* meaning believe or worship.

[2] _____*Yikhum Baptist Church,* First 100 year Memory Celebration Among the Lotha (Dimapur: New Printing Press, Circular road, 1998), 9-10.

[3] The first Naga to go in the United State of America for receiving Christian Education through ABMU.

[4] _____*Yikhum Baptist Church,* First 100 year Memory Celebration Among the Lotha (Dimapur: New Printing Press, Circular road, 1998), 9-10.

[5] Renthungo Murry, 'Treasurer' *Yikhum Baptist Church*. Interviewed on 23rd Aug 2017.

bear some fruits. So they constructed Church to have fellowship with the living God and to communicate with one another. [6] And slowly the entire village became Christian village. Lately, around 1100-1300 (approximately) believers are there in the Church and Church is under construction of a New Church building.

3. Branches (dept.) within the Church

Through the hard work of God's servants presently the entire villagers are Christian, one denomination i.e., Baptist. As the days believers are increasing constantly in their spiritual from the oldest to the youngest. Church has four functioning branches viz, main body (Church), woman department, youth department, Sunday school. Every department give more emphasis to the Biblical Truth. Church also has mission field and mission board to reach out the unreached.

v. Main body (Church)

Within the church there are different branches to shepherd the believers, Pastor is the overall mentor, and so all the departments will approach the pastor before they make final decisions. They approach pastor's suggestions in ever big programs. Pastor has the authority to refuse the program in case, if the program is not going to help believers or nothing to do with benefit of the believers for their spiritual grow then pastor refuse to have the program the department will stay back with a proper consolation. However, since the role of the pastor is to take care of the believers, mentoring his fellow office staffs (head of the dept.) and believers to grow spiritually, he will give the word of God to nurture the believers, and train them base on the bible.[7]

vi. Woman department

Woman department plays important role in the church. Leader work is to equip the woman in the village, sometimes mainly emphasis on the young mothers to deal of how to be a good mother, train up children, and raise Christian home. They have service on ever Thursdays evening.[8] They also have a special program only for widows and spinsters once in a year. Apart from yearly activities the he dept. also give some seminar base on woman role in the society, church, family, and even on woman body structure (how to keep healthy/take care of

---

[6] Ibid.
[7] Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 30th Aug 2017.
[8] Ibid.

themselves). This department also taking care of the old age woman in the village, praying form them also helping them materially when it is in need.[9]

vii. Youth department

Youth is another dept. which plays very important role in the life of the youngsters. Since youth stage is the precious stage and on the other hand dangerous stage if we don't take care. This is the stage of easy to do and influence, and this is the period of energetic to seek God. Therefore, Church came up this dept. to mainly focus on the youth. So, the leader is taking care of the entire youth in the village alone with his staffs (youth dept. deacons). The purpose is to help the youth in understanding of God's purpose of life. They have service on every Saturday evening, where they listens the word of God and also equip them. They are also organizing lot spiritual activities to motivate and equip the youth spiritually.[10]

viii. Sunday school

Children are the foundation to build a strong Christian community. They are the future of tomorrow. Therefore Church is giving important to the dept. to train and equip the children well through the word of God. Therefore every Sunday' morning Sunday school is conducting, during class hours teachers are using lot of methods and technologies to let the children understand well the biblical truth, and also conducting Vacation Bible school during students holidays. And the leader takes care of the children teaching biblical truth and visiting homes.[11]

4. Activities in the Church

i. Worships and prayer meeting

Prayer is very much important in Christian lives therefore believers give importance to prayers and in every Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays believers are gathering for prayer and sharing the word of God.[12]

ii. Spiritual Renewal

Renewing of spiritual gives strength in everyday lives, therefore Church is conducting various kinds of spiritual activities like revival, fasting and prayers[13], etc. Spiritual renewal programs really help the believers to grow spiritually.[14]

---

[9] Pricilla Kithan 'Women's Leader', *Yikhum Baptist Church*. Interviewed on 30th Aug 2017.
[10] Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 05th Sep 2017.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Shanjamo Odyuo 'Associate Pastor', Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 10th Sep 2017.

iii. Prayer Warriors

There is a group of people Adult and old age who loves to pray constantly. They gather together in the Church and sometimes gather in an isolate places for prayer meeting, sometimes they fast whole day and talk to God. They are giving lot of effort in prayer. They are strong prayer warriors and we can see God's answers their prayers.[15]

iv. Cell Group Meeting (Khel)

There are four khels in the village, and ever khel has a cell group. They gather in the every evening of Sundays for prayer and sometimes taking Bible studies. This also helps a lot to the believers in growing spiritually.[16]

5. Impact

One of the good lesson we can learn from the villagers is that the unity as a whole. Church had given lot of effort of bring Church and Council together and lately Church and Council are one. In every task that Church decides for God's glory or benefit of the believers Council agree it. Both the Church and Council work together to be better living and therefore in the result, the village was declared the first Free Tobacco Village in Wokha district and the third village in Nagaland to declared Free Tobacco by the Government of Nagaland.

Church also teaches giving rather than receiving so Yikhumden[17] have understood better than before of being a Christian. They experienced the love of God in their lives and lifestyle of the believers has changed. They found more interest or the meaning or purpose of giving. One of the most motivating things of the believers is that they are doing great job which they have never took this kinds of task ever before, i.e. every believers has a zeal and committed to support missionaries in a way they can support. Lately, Church is supporting 82 missionaries in various places in India and even abroad. Out of those Church is fully sponsoring 5 missionaries and the rest supporting by the individuals, families, and clans, with the connection of the Church. Church has recently established a New Church at mission field in Dhemaji, Assam. And the believers in the mission field are increasing constantly.[18]

---

[13] Once in a month

[14] Shanjamo Odyuo 'Associate Pastor', Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 10th Sep 2017.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 05th Sep 2017.

[17] The entire people in the village.

[18] Indian Evangelical Mission, (IEM) Outreach. June 2017 Issue. Bangalore: Langford Road.

6. Critical Analysis

Yikhum Church is a good Christian Church. Church gives more emphasis on prayer because they have experienced the power of Prayer. Presently Church is going smoothly, and even all the head of the department works together smoothly. One good example is hard of the dept. don't feel pride by holding on their position but help each other, even the pastor does and involves in Sunday school activities. Because of the motivation of the Pastor and his staffs believers give more in spiritual growth rather physical or prosperity. Thus far there is no division within the believers, no discrimination conflict, they see in a same point of view in one faith and one hope. The Church is conducting several spiritual activities and we can see believers growing spiritually.

The Church is also a mission Church and doing great things for the extension of God's kingdom. Church is moulding or teaching the word of God not only the local believers, but also reaching out the unreached people to teach them biblical truth. Reaching out the people with the news of salvation is God's plan as we see God's commission given to us in gospel according to Matthew 28:19-20. Believers are reaching out people to the place where they don't know by supporting the missionaries. This has to be appreciated.

We also see the unity within the Church, every believers is treated equal in a same point of view. One reason is may be because there's no other denomination in the village, only Baptist and that makes them to grow stronger in their faith. In a meanwhile pastor and his staff also giving lot of effort to nurture the believers with the word of God. So the believers are living according to the word of God, but I' am not saying that they don't make mistakes. But, here my point is since they have understood better of being a Christian than before.

Yikhum Church is also a generosity and hosting Church of others. Church has no hesitation to welcome people or hosting conference. As the word of God says not do neglect strangers, Church or believers love to welcome people who come from outside "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrew 12:2). Therefore, lot of visitors from other churches and have conferences ever month.

But, in a meantime there are challenges that Church is facing in a present scenario. Church is trying the best way to capture the youth but since majority of them stay or study out of the station (village), so when the youth arrive in the village they come with different notions and on top of that they come with the worldly attitude. Another challenge is pastor or leaders should prepare well enough to preach the word of God, because believers can easily notice or

evaluate the message wither the words are coming from the Holy Spirit or not. By God's grace believers have growing spiritually so they can distinguish our word and the word of the Holy Spirit. The third challenge is within the children. Some of the families are not doing what they are supposed to do, to train and equip the children, so leaders are facing difficulties with those children.

Over all Church can limit the visitors of welcoming may be one in a month because when visitors come from other churches they take the services. Sometimes, they (some) bring slight difference from what we teach and that confuse the believers. On the other hand I would suggest that Church upgrade or give more bible study that may help the believers more in understanding the word of God. Of course, Church conducts bible study but my point is it would be better if Church conduct at least three or two times in a month.

7. Conclusion

As we have seen the discussion above that Yikhum Church is the first or oldest Church among the Lothas. Foreign missionary, Witter brought the light of Christ while people were still in the darkness. By a name Nkhao Jungi accepted Christ and ministers his own people and slowly the entire village became Christian village. We have also seen that Church is now 119 years. Church has different branches where they give lots of emphasis to the biblical truth, and to educate, equip and train the believers with the word of God.

On the other hand we have also seen that Church is conducting many spiritual activities to strengthen the believers in their faith, and believers have understood the power of prayer. And because of the unity in the Church or among the believers and council supports the village is a free Tobacco village which is every good example for Churches. From the discussion we also have seen the zeal of the believers in mission works, they are showing their faith in action. In the above discussion we also have seen the main challenge that Church is facing i.e. the youngsters who are studying from different station. Due to the active participation of the believers pastor or leaders should well prepare or rooted in the word of God.

Bibliography

_____ *Yikhum Baptist Church,* First 100 year Memory Celebration Among the Lotha. Dimapur: New Printing Press, Circular road, 1998.

Kithan, Pricilla. 'Women's Leader', *Yikhum Baptist Church*. Interviewed on 30th Aug 2017.

Kithan, Zanbemo. 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 30th Aug 2017.

Murry, Renthungo. 'Treasurer' *Yikhum Baptist Church*. Interviewed on 23rd Aug 2017.

Odyuo, Shanjamo, 'Associate Pastor', Zanbemo Kithan 'Pastor', *Yikhum Baptist Church.* Interviewed on 10th Sep 2017.

Indian Evangelical Mission, (IEM) Outreach. June 2017 Issue. Bangalore: Langford Road.